

PROTECTING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a set of guiding principles and minimum standards for creating a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults at all levels of the Federation.
2. The Galen Centre for Health & Social Policy's (Galen Centre) work is grounded in core international human rights instruments, authoritative interpretations of international standards and additional entitlements related to human sexuality. Ensuring sexual rights for all includes a commitment to freedom and protection from harm.
3. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) affords special rights and protections to all those under the age of 18. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'children' is used to refer to those under the age of 18.
4. The Galen Centre understands that the rights and protections guaranteed to people under age eighteen (18), as a matter of international and national law, sometimes differ from the rights of adults. These differences relate to all aspects of human rights but require particular approaches in regard to sexual rights. The Galen Centre begins from the premise that persons under eighteen (18) are rights holders, and that at different points within the spectrum of infancy, childhood, and adolescence, certain rights and protections will have greater or lesser relevance.
5. In addition, the Galen Centre is increasingly working with vulnerable adults, which include those who identify themselves as unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or exploitation. Vulnerable adults are also those who may be more at risk of abuse and exploitation due to factors such as, for example, gender, mental health issues, learning or physical disabilities, age, sexual orientation, or as a result of the impact of natural disasters and conflicts¹.

Definitions

6. Child abuse and neglect, sometimes also referred to as child maltreatment, is defined as all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power.

Within the broad definition of child maltreatment, five subtypes are distinguished – these are physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and negligent treatment; emotional abuse and exploitation (WHO 1999/2002).

¹ It is widely recognised that children are generally more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation due to their age, status, developmental stage, and reliance on others. Vulnerable adult refers to a person, 18 years and above, who may be regarded as susceptible to harm and at increased risk due to personal circumstances, the context they are in or as a result of social and other inequalities and as a result or in addition, are not in a position to adequately protect themselves.

Scope

7. The policy applies to all staff of the Galen Centre, whatever their status is, including all staff, volunteers, interns and consultants.

The Galen Centre will only collaborate with other organizations that come in contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults, if they agree with the standards and principles of the Galen Centre on protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Guiding principles

8. The Galen Centre recognizes that, as rights-holders, children, young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to access sexual and reproductive health information and services and to do so in ways that keep them safe from abuse or exploitation.
9. The Galen Centre does not tolerate any type of abuse or exploitation towards any child, young person or vulnerable adult and commits to ensuring that all staff and associates are made aware of, and supported in, their responsibilities to prevent abuse and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults.
10. The Galen Centre recognizes that the denial of children's, young people's and vulnerable adults' sexual rights, particularly their rights to participation and expression, is in part responsible for their vulnerability.
11. The Galen Centre considers that adults, parents, guardians, carers, service providers, educators and others who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are duty-bearers in relation to their sexual rights and have a responsibility to ensure that the rights of children, young people and vulnerable adults are met.
12. The Galen Centre believes that creating a safe environment for all children, young people and vulnerable adults requires the cooperation of all staff members.

Policy

13. The Galen Centre must have in place and make widely available, including to children, young people and vulnerable adults, a policy for creating safe environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults. At a minimum, the policy must include:
 - Safe recruitment and screening processes, including criminal record checks (where available), targeted interview questions and verbal referee checks for all staff members who will be working with children, young people and vulnerable adults;
 - A Code of Conduct that must be signed by all staff
 - A provision in all employment contracts stating that the organisation has the right to take disciplinary action, including dismissal against personnel who breach the Code of Conduct;
 - A documented complaints management procedure that is publicised widely, including to children, young people and vulnerable adults, to provide for effective reporting and responding to breaches of the Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct;
 - Regular provision of training for all staff members and volunteers on creating safe environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults, including induction training for new staff members and volunteers;

- Measures are put in place to ensure partners, grantees, consultants etc. that work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are operating in line with the Galen Centre's principles and standards on protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
 - Provision for policy review at least every three years.
14. Projects that provide sexual and reproductive health services to children, young people and vulnerable adults should have a policy in place to ensure that service delivery points are safe environments that, at a minimum, have guidance for health professionals on their legal, professional and ethical obligations to report suspected abuse or exploitation of a vulnerable client; to respect their right to privacy; and to obtain their informed consent.

Implementation and compliance

15. It shall be the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer or any designated person at the management level, to ensure that policies that meet the above-mentioned minimum standards are in place and are implemented accordingly.

ANNEX 1

Situations of risk for intentional or unintentional harm

Direct contact with children, young people, and vulnerable adults

1. Staff/volunteers can be in the physical presence of a child, young person, vulnerable adult or children, young people and vulnerable adults in the context of the organisation's work, whether contact is occasional or regular, short or long term;
2. This could involve clinical services, capacity building, information and (peer) education in and outside the school setting or in community settings.
3. This also could involve project/site visits and attending conferences at local, national, regional and international levels

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff, volunteers, interns and consultants should avoid actions or behaviour that may constitute poor practice or abusive behaviour.

Indirect contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults

1. This includes staff, volunteers and interns having access to information on children, young people and vulnerable adults in the context of the organisation's work, such as their names, locations (addresses of individuals or projects), photographs and case studies without expressed permission and/or informed consent;
2. Providing support/training/funding for organisations that work 'directly' with children, young people and vulnerable adults. Albeit indirectly, this nonetheless has an impact on children, young people and vulnerable adults and therefore confers upon the organisation responsibility for protection issues.

NB: This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list.

Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

This code of conduct sets out the Galen Centre for Health & Social Policy's (Galen Centre) expectations of personnel working with children and vulnerable adults.

Applicable to all Galen Centre personnel* working with children and vulnerable adults, who must sign up to and abide by this Code of Conduct. For the purposes of this code of conduct:

- A child is a person under the age of 18;
- A vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 who may be regarded as susceptible to harm and at increased risk due to their circumstances, the context they are in or as a result of social and other inequalities.

I [*insert name*], agree that while undertaking work or activities for the Galen Centre, I will:

- Treat children and vulnerable adults with respect regardless of age, race, colour, sex, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status and will not discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular children or vulnerable adults to the exclusion of others
- Not hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children or vulnerable adults
- Refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children or vulnerable adults
- Not develop physical/sexual relationships with nor engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for sexual services or acts, with children where under the law(s) applicable to the child, the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws, or with vulnerable adults
- Not develop relationships with children or vulnerable adults which could in any way be deemed exploitative or abusive
- Not act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child or vulnerable adult at risk of abuse
- Not use language, make suggestions, or offer advice to children or vulnerable adults which is inappropriate, harassing, sexually provocative, offensive, abusive, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- Not behave towards children or vulnerable adults physically in a manner which is inappropriate or sexually provocative
- Not condone or participate in behaviour which is illegal, unsafe or abusive to children or vulnerable adults
- Within the regulatory framework of a given country refrain from hiring children or vulnerable adults for domestic or other labour, which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury
- Not invite unaccompanied children into my home, place of residence or accommodation if away from my home
- Not sleep in the same room as an unsupervised child or vulnerable adult unless absolutely essential, i.e. to ensure their protection, in which case I must obtain permission from my supervisor or other appropriate person in authority at the Galen Centre.

- Not use any computers, mobile telephones, or video and digital cameras inappropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access, download, distribute, store or create child pornography through any medium (see also 'Use of children's images for work related purposes')
- Not do things for children or vulnerable adults of a personal nature which they can do for themselves
- Not act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children or vulnerable adults, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Comply with relevant legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that personnel should avoid actions or behaviour towards or around children and vulnerable adults which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children or vulnerable adults away from others
- Take children or vulnerable adults to your home or accommodation, especially where they will be alone with you

It is important for all personnel to:

- Be aware of situations which may present risks and manage these
- Plan and organize work/activities and the workplace so as to minimise risks
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present with or within the proximity of children or vulnerable adults
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged
- Talk to children and vulnerable adults about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise concerns
- Empower children and vulnerable adults - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem
- Engage with and comply fully with any sanctioned Galen Centre protection reporting or complaints procedures

Use of children's images for work related purposes

When photographing or filming a child for work related purposes, I must

- Before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images
- Before photographing or filming a child, obtain consent from the child or parent or guardian of the child. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used
- Ensure photographs, films, videos, recordings and online streaming present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive way. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- Ensure file labels do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically

I understand that the onus is on me, as the person engaged by Galen Centre, to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as abusive when engaged to undertake work or activities for Galen Centre.

I understand that Galen Centre may take disciplinary action if I breach this code of conduct and that serious breaches may result in action leading to dismissal (if employed) or termination of my relationship with Galen Centre (if not employed).

I understand I am duty bound to report any concerns relating to actual or possible abuse or exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult or risk of such, and to notify relevant Galen Centre personnel as described in the reporting procedures of any actual or possible breaches of this code of conduct.

Signed

Print Name

Date

